

Partnering With Tribes to Conserve Natural Resources in Washington

Funding Obligated to Tribes by County (2014)

County	Sum of \$ Obligated
Clallam	\$116,255
Ferry	\$152,321
Grays Harbor	\$121,215
Klickitat	\$50,000
Mason	\$77,028
Okanogan	\$254,248
Pierce	\$15,053
Yakima	\$628,063
Grand Total	\$1,414,183

Source: IDEAMapIt Data Extract and ProTracts, Oct. 2014

Washington Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (WATCAC)

The Washington Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (WATCAC) is comprised of representatives from participating tribes and members of NRCS State Leadership. WATCAC serves in an advisory role to NRCS regarding programs, practice standards and tribal resource priorities. In FY12, NRCS entered into an agreement with the Colville Tribal Conservation District to assist with coordinating WATCAC teleconferences and organize the yearly face-to-face meeting.

All tribes are welcome to participate in the monthly WATCAC meetings/teleconferences. Tribes who submit resolutions declaring participation in and appointing representatives to the WATCAC have voting privileges. If your tribe is considering participation and/or a resolution, please contact your NRCS tribal liaison.

For More Information Washington NRCS

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www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/partnerships/tribes



from left to right: Melissa Gilman, Systems of Care Admin Assistant, Aleilah Lawson Tribal Wellness Coordinator, Ruth Charles Master Gardener and Sissi Bruch Elwha Senior Planner.

Tunnel of Health

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribes high tunnel is a hit. In April 2014, about 30 volunteers pitched in to control weeds, work the soil, and construct a 1,440 foot structure. As part of the Tribal Food Sovereignty Program, the tribe is growing crops such as eggplant, tomatoes, broccoli, cucumbers, red cabbage and herbs that include basil, chocolate mint, sage and rosemary to name a few. The incidence of diabetes and cancer is high among tribes and the project is being utilized to help promote a healthier lifestyle among the tribal members and spark interest in home organic vegetable gardening.

The Clallam County Master Gardeners were made aware of the high tunnel program through Clea Rome, Washington State University Extension Agent, and former NRCS employee at the Port Angeles Field Office. Jim Poffel, resource conservationist with NRCS met with Ruth Charles and Sheryl Charging Whirlwind, both lower Elwha Elders, to begin application process. Ruth and Sheryl were the first Native Americans in Clallam County to become Master Gardeners. Sissi Bruch Elwha, Senior Planner and Aleilah Lawson, Tribal Wellness Coordinator, were both instrumental in getting the project on the ground.

On June 26, 2014 the high tunnel received a tribal blessing and starts were planted. Within a month, broccoli, kale and zucchini were being harvested. To paraphrase one of the workers that was working on a fence to keep out the deer and rabbits "After seeing this project when I go to the store it makes me shop differently and shop healthy."

Team USDA Holds Breakout Session at ATNI

Several agencies within the US Department of Agriculture held a breakout session at the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians annual conference in Pendleton, OR on September 24, 2014. Representatives from seven USDA agencies based in Washington State introduced themselves and briefly described the mission of their agency. Agencies represented included WSU Extension, National Ag Statistics Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Risk Management Agency, Rural Development and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

About 45 people were in attendance at the "standing room only" session. Tribal representatives asked many questions and at the conclusion, they requested that Team USDA hold another session at the winter conference in Lincoln City, OR in February. The date and time of the session is still to be determined.